1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

who practise in Secundrabad and Hyderabad, and a few even go to the well-equipped hospitals for prolonged treatment of difficult and persistent diseases. However, for the majority of the population the only medicines used for ordinary ailments are the inexpensive indigenous herbs and drugs which are locally available.

The local post office, under one of the village schoolmasters, serves Shamirpet and a large number of adjoining villages. The system of mail distribution in the countryside is very defective. Often the village postman takes a month or even more to reach a village on his periodic rounds. Letters are generally delivered personally to people who come to the post office for them, or they are handed to a co-villager who happens to visit the post office, for further transmission.

The police station at Shamirpet is in charge of a sub-inspector and has a strength of two head constables and twelve constables. This force is responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the villages under its jurisdiction. The police keep an eye on all doubtful characters, organize regular patrols of the villages and through the subordinate officials keep themselves informed of local developments. Their official records register all births and deaths, which must be reported by the inhabitants of the village.

As the tank is more than a mile from the village, the people use well water for domestic purposes. In respect of wells, Shamirpet has been very unlucky. Out of a total of thirty-three wells within the village limits, there are only three which yield good, drinkable water, the water of all other wells being brackish and unpalatable. Most people are therefore able to use sweet water only for drinking and cooking, whilst clothes and household utensils are washed in brackish water. The outlying wards of the Malas and Madigas are more fortunate in this respect, for their wells, situated at a distance of about half a mile from their respective colonies, yield 'sweet' water. In the summer months there is often an acute scarcity of drinking water in the village, and at this time large crowds of women gather at the few sweet-water wells waiting patiently to fill their many brass and earthen pots. This time of enforced waiting is spent in gossiping, in exchanging news and often in relating the latest scandals.

The sanitation of the village is the responsibility of the Yetti Madigas, whose traditional duty it is to sweep the street and lanes; in return for the service, the government grants them the use of certain rent-free lands. 27

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

596 entitles him to maintain a controlling hand in domestic affairs. In the case of the head of the family also, much depends on the character and personality of the individual concerned. An irresponsible head who becomes a liability to the members of his family forfeits his claim to their obedience and respect, and in such cases the sympathy of the village people is generally given to the dissenting members of the family. Even after separation [527] it is good form to treat the elders with courtesy and respect. On the occasions of family reunions, such as those connected with the crises of life or with the annual offering of water to the spirits of the deceased, it is the eldest member of the family who occupies the dominant position. In general, even after separation his help is sought in cases of disease and difficulty, and in all matters involving priority of one or the other, preference is always given to the elder. The exact position of the head of the family would, however, vary according to the equations of different families, with which we propose to deal later.

622 The Deshmukh also figures at the head of the government or semi-government village officials, whose relative positions can be arranged in a tabular form as follows:

[625]

DESHMUKH
[Combining the offices of Mali Patel and Police Patel]

Sub-Inspector of Police
Head Constables
Masters
Constables

Patwari

FOURTEEN VILLAGE MENIALS

i. Kawalkar	viii. Kammari
ii. Talari	ix. Kummari
iii. Majkuri	x. Sakali
iv. Neerudi	xi. Mangali
v. Begari	xii. Ausula
vi. Yetti	xiii. Dappu
vii. Wadla	xiv. Kommu

622 625 465 The Deshmukh is the recognized headman of the village. Two hundred and ten acres of rent-free land, the normal revenue of which would have been Rs. 556/6/-, have been granted to him by the State. He also formally holds the offices of Mali Patel and Police Patel; in the former capacity he assists the government officials in the collection of land revenue, in the latter he helps the police in the maintenance of law and order. The Deshmukh used to cultivate the rent-free land earmarked by the government for persons serving in these two capacities, but he had delegated his powers

1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

and functions to agents who acted for him. Now he gets a certain percentage of the total revenue collected in the village in lieu of the rent-free land. Thus, theoretically, the Deshmukh is both Mali Patel and Police Patel; but in actual practice these duties are carried out by his agents. In his capacity as Mali Patel of the village the Deshmukh takes steps to ensure the speedy collection of land revenue after each harvest and remits it to the district treasury. The Patwari can seek his assistance in matters connected with the land records and revenue of the village. For this he gets annually 5% of the total land revenue collected in the village. As Police Patel the Deshmukh is entitled to receive another 5% of the revenue collected during the year. In this capacity he has to send regular reports to the police regarding the occurrence of any crime in the village, keep an eye on the 'bad characters' and watch the activities of suspicious strangers. He maintains records of births and deaths in the village. It is his duty to assist the police in all possible ways in their investigations regarding criminal offences in the village. The other officials, such as the sub-inspector of police, head constables, constables and schoolmasters, are not a permanent part of the local population, and as such they do not generally get mixed up in local politics and other affairs. The police officials enjoy both prestige and power and are, in general, greatly feared by the people.

The Patwari, in spite of the fact that he is a petty revenue and land records official, occupies a pivotal position in the village and plays a very significant part in local politics. Being in charge of the land records, he can manipulate things both to the advantage and disadvantage of landowners, who often consult him and ask his advice. Of Patwaris in general it is said, 'What will they not do for a consideration? Give them money and they will prove their own father a bastard.' The present Patwari of Shamirpet is, for one in his position, a man of more than average intelligence and is himself a careful and substantial cultivator who owns some 247 acres of land jointly with his brother. He receives no salary from the government, nor does he have any rent-free land, but a certain percentage of the total land revenue is fixed by the government as his remuneration for the work.

All villages in Hyderabad State, as do most of those of middle and peninsular India, have a number of village menials. Their functions in the internal organization of the village are of two

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Telugu A.W.I.

Education.—A day school has recently been started with 40 on the roll, 25 average attendance. Most of the pupils come from other villages. Three adults are able to read the vernacular. Eight can write their signatures. The karnam alone can read and write well. About five or six have learned to read and write but have lost the ability latterly. No one knows English.

There are about 50 or 60 books, all in Telugu. Of these about seven or eight relate to the Hindu Law and to village administration. The rest relate to the Puranas.

Village administration.—There is no panchayat.

There is a monigar and a karnam and two talaiyaris. The karnam keeps the accounts of the village, and the monigar is the village magistrate and collects the kist. The talaiyaris are the servants attached to the village. There is no sanitary administration.

The nearest Police station is situated at a distance of 12 miles in Sodam, which station was formerly at Kandur.

In recent years there has been practically no crime. About five years ago there was a murder, never detected.

For the present there is only one case belonging to this village pending judgment at the Sessions Court, Chittoor. This is about a land dispute.

Ordinarily disputes are settled here in the presence of the monigar, karnam, and some leading men of the village.

History and prospects.—There has been economic deterioration due to the scarcity of rains and the consequent failure of crops. The ryots have been impoverished and consequently obliged to get into the clutches of creditors.

For the present there does not seem to be scope for economic improvement. The tanks are all getting silted up. The bunds are getting decreased in height. Recently one bund burst. The persons concerned are very poor to bear the cost of repairs. But if the repairs are executed then there might be some improvement and the area of irrigated lands might be extended.

More wells could be sunk with advantage. They are not sunk owing to lack of funds with the ryots. People sell land owing to the fact that by doing so only they can support their families and themselves. Land is bought by well-to-do persons as a sort of investment and also because it is sometimes had at a price lower than its right worth.

In recent years there has been no emigration at all. But about ten years ago two persons of Yekili caste emigrated to Natal. They have not since returned. Their emigration was due to their failure to get a living here.

Such movements have generally no visible effect on the life of the village.

Another interesting point is that smelting ovens are seen all round the village in a state of ruin. It seems that formerly (about thirty or forty years ago) iron ore found all round the village was smelted here locally, and that this was sufficient for the local demand. But now no such practice exists. However iron is still found in the shape of filings in large or small quantities round about. Moreover this iron is held to be of good quality. More detailed information can be had from the North Arcot District Manual, wherein it is mentioned.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India Telugu AWI 7

rooms. The school buildings have been erected at the cost of the villagers. Efforts are being made to provide more accommodation. The school trains pupils for the Kanarese Lower Secondary Examination and instruction is given in Kanarese. Now efforts are being made to open classes in English and also to open a school exclusively for girls. There are about fifty boys in attendance and about fifty girls. School is held from 6-30 to 10-30 in the morning and from 2 to 6 in the evening. No time is allowed for play at all. Instruction is in Kanarese, although the language the people speak is Telugu.

The number of persons who know how to read the vernacular is 131; fifteen or sixteen can read and write English.

There are about thirty or forty books almost all in Sanskrit and Kanarese.

A night school has recently been opened. It has twenty on the rolls, mostly adults. Average attendance five.

Village administration.—There is a panchayat composed of five members. The main work of the panchayat lies in the field of village improvement in the different branches of education, sanitation, etc.

There is a patel and a shanbhog. The shanbhog's duty lies in keeping the village accounts. The patel is concerned with the general oversight of the village and the collection of revenue. There are four servants, two for police purposes and the two others concerned in the collection of revenue.

Sanitary administration.—The panchayat is concerned with the sanitary administration of the village. The panchayat holds meetings when occasion arises and takes steps to improve the sanitation of the village. Every Monday each family supplies half a day's labour, compoundable by a money payment of an anna. This does what is needful for the sanitation of the village. The panchayat exercises a general oversight in these matters. The Sanitary Inspector and the District Health and Sanitary Officer inspect the village often.

There is a police sub-station with a daffadar and five police constables. During nights, three other men watch the village; their services are purely voluntary and unpaid.

The higher authorities are the Amildar, Assistant Commissioner, and the Deputy Commissioner. The Amildar is the only official with whom there is contact at all often. The others visit the village about once or twice in a year. There is a resident shaikdar or revenue inspector.

Crime.—There have been practically no crimes punishable with capital punishment hitherto. Whatever crime there has been consists only of burglaries and minor thefts. These too are rare. For the past six years there has been only one burglary (in 1916); valuables were lost to the value of Rs. 150.

No villagers are engaged in litigation. Almost all civil disputes are decided in the village itself by the panchayat.

History and prospects.—There has been economic deterioration due to the scarcity of rains and the consequent failure of crops. The ryots have been obliged to borrow and this is very well evidenced by the amount of rural indebtedness. No remission is

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Telugu AWI7

796 from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150, largely spent on drink. The priests of the godless are low caste people, chiefly the washerman caste. They get new cloths as presents. The whole celebration is barbarous and repulsive.

The village administration.—There is no panchayat in the village.
624 The village officers consist of a karnam, a munsif, and three servants. The karnam keeps the village accounts, while the munsif collects the revenue and attends to small criminal cases. The munsif does not generally care to try civil cases even within his province; they all go to the District Munsif's court.

364 Nobody attends to the village sanitation, though the munsif is expected to do so. The villagers too do not care to help him in his work. The Sanitary Inspector comes once in a year, and quietly goes away with satisfactory remarks from the easy chair in his note book. He being the one officer for two or three taluks, cannot pay much attention to one taluk in particular; besides he also has engineering work.

●635 The police station is seven miles away. When crimes of extraordinary nature take place, the munsif reports the same to the police, who come and conduct enquiries. Most of the crimes are hushed up. Police enquiry is a sham. So is the night patrolling, which is the duty of the village servants.

692 The munsif is expected to hear petty crimes; but many cases
696 that might have been decided here go to the Magistrate's court. Many crimes have been left undetected, and the criminals unpunished, crimes which were horrible and plainly proved. As locally interpreted, the effect of the Evidence Act is such as to render the most proved case null and void for "want of proper evidence." When a murderer once escapes easily from punishment, another is at once encouraged. All the villagers know that it is these considerations that encouraged a man engaged in litigation to murder another who was about to give evidence against him. That case went unpunished. Such is the case with most murders. In fact, most men engaged in important litigation are afraid for their
674 lives in this village. In three years there have been four murders in the neighbourhood of the village, two killed in connection with litigation and two in connection with robbery from the person.

691 There is much litigation. About 45 cases are filed every year. Of these twenty to twenty-five will be for non-clearance of debts, and fifteen to twenty for land disputes. The villagers do not seem to show any hesitation or fear in resorting to the courts. The half educated Brahman in the village, acting as an agent for a vakil, with no other profession, tries to earn his livelihood by creating enmity and disputes among ignorant families and dragging them to the courts. Thus several families which were once considered very rich have been ruined. One family of Komatis, for example, with a property of about Rs. 20,000, was sued by some relations for a partition of the estate. The Vaisya refused all compromise in the earlier courts, pursued the case at enormous expense through the three courts, till he finally lost the whole estate in the High Court. In the end, the family of twelve children, with not an inch of land for support, and no means of liquidating the debts contracted for the court expenses, have sold their big house and gone away to the Agency tracts as beggars to fill their bellies. There are many families in the village similarly ruined.